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PRESENTED BY

FELIX E. SCHELLING

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THOR

AND SOME OTHER WAR RHYMES

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BY

FELIX E. SCHELLING

1918

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Gift
J. M. Koch
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TO OUR CAPTAIN

O silent Captain of our ship of state,
Pacing the bridge incessant, thy calm eye
Pierceth the mists and knoweth the chart whereby
We sail these perilous seas, inviolate.
We loll in cabins or, impatient, wait
On deck and, hapless, ask for reasons why,
And criticize and argue and reply,
Discussing petty things in sage debate.
Give us, our Captain, of thy equipoise,
That we may know our duty and the right,
That we may quell this madness which destroys
All that we love and hope from times to come;
Then, bring us, clean of hand, in conscience white,
Safe into port, to peace once more, and home.

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EUROPE
AMERICA
ENGLAND
FRANCE
BELGIUM
ITALY
RUSSIA
POLAND
GREECE
AUSTRIA
TURKEY
GERMANY

PROEM

LARGE is his claim who'd pose for poet.
No such claim's here; so, pray, bestow it—
Your praise, I mean—where you most owe it:
For only such reap fame as sow it.
In this mad world, there's much that worse is
Than the gentle art of verses.
These are merely simple rhymes,
Begotten by our troublous times.

THOR

"Wir sind von des Hammer-Gottes Geschlecht
Und wollen sein Weltreich erben."

F. Dahn, *Gedichte*, 1900.

THOR! Thor! Thor! Thor!
God of battle, god of gore,
God of thunder,
God of plunder,
God of slaughter, god of gore!

They fashioned them a wooden idol,
(Such their fathers made of yore),
In likeness of a man they made it,
(None so huge had been before);
A god of girth, prodigious, burly,
Grim of countenance, gruesome, surly,
Wide of back and broad of thigh,
He held a hammer raised on high,
A hammer, brandished, raised on high;—
Tool for using
And abusing,
Making, breaking, beating, bruising,
Wrought by force in fire by fusing,
Type of brutal strength and pride;—
Feet set wide,
Great legs astride,
Posed, theatrical, bombastic,
Shameless, naked, gross, fantastic,
Their idol stood with vacant eyes,
Staring at the silent skies.

Thus they wrought their god of wood,
Forty cubits high it stood:
They had made it, it was good.

Thor! Thor! Thor! Thor!
God of carnage, god of gore,
Thy sable mantle drags behind thee,
Naught in heaven or hell can bind thee;
God of wonder,
God of plunder,
God of carnage, god of gore!

Among them there's a time-worn adage,
Buried deep in savage lore,
'Tis, "If you but wound your idol,
He will grant what you implore."
So they drove sharp nails into him,
Strove with thrust and cut t' imbrue him
In his own most precious gore;
Nails they drove of copper, silver,
Fruit of raid, of fraud or pilfer,
Nails of iron and of gold,
Driven hard and driven bold;
"Brad and peg and spike and rivet,
What you have, come, bring it, give it,
Pound with hammer, mace and maul,
Drive your little, drive your all!"
Clatter, clatter,
Bang and batter,
How the hammers ring and patter!
Till the image of the god
In shining metal's sheathed and shod.

They had wrought their god of wood,
Forty cubits high it stood:
They had made it, it was good.

Thor! Thor! Thor! Thor!
God of battle, god of gore,
God of plunder,
God of blunder,
Giant god of the wooden core!

Such the idol that they worship,
Such the god to whom they whine,
Such the rites before their totem,
Rites that blaspheme things divine;
Who can marvel such men scatter
Death and desolation, shatter
Art they cannot understand,
Shatter, scatter,
Ban and batter
On in havoc and rapine?

Thor 'tis, knows nor faith nor honor,
Thor's the fool who thinks he can
Frighten into cowed submission
The heroic heart of man;
Thor 'tis rapes, enslaves and murders,
Deals the coward's blow 'neath the sea:
Hun nor Goth nor Turk nor Vandal's
Left a blood trail such as he;
Vandal, Turk, nor Hun nor East Goth's
Left a name as black as he.

Thor! Thor! Thor! Thor!
God of carnage, god of gore,
Thy blood-stained track lies foul behind thee,
God, in his righteous vengeance, find thee,
God in his mercy, bind thee,
Blind thee!
God of slaughter, god of gore!

THE HARVEST FIELDS OF FRANCE

ALAS, for the harvest fields of France,
The blood-red poppy fields of France!
Trodden to mire and ground to dust,
Prone at the will of a madman's lust;
For who can stay that sure advance,
The rattle of arms, the set of lance?
God knows the cause of France is just,
To whom may we turn, what man dare we trust?
Alas, for the harvest fields of France,
The blood-red poppy fields of France!

Alas, for the harvest fields of France,
The blood-stained battle fields of France!
Foiled is the madman in his lust,
Back to his puppet emperor thrust;
France is preserved! no wild romance
That great deed's glory can enhance:
God knows the cause of France is just;
But, alas, for the brave hearts turned to dust!
Alas, for the harvest fields of France,
The blood-stained battle fields of France!

WHY ARE WE FIGHTING

WHY are we fighting, tell me why?
Because the Germans plot, and ply
The submarine, because they spy
On neutrals, their pledged word deny,
And, strong in arms, the world defy;
Because they wantonly decry
The rights of nationality;
Because they're lost in savagery
And foul the earth, the sea and sky;
Because they rape and crucify;
Because they'd make this earth a sty,
Unfit for free democracy:
These are some of the reasons why,
Yes, these are some of the reasons why.

Why are we fighting, tell me why?
Because the Belgian children cry,
And widows weep, and old men sigh
That freemen toil in slavery;
Because brave men in battle die,
And steadfast French and Britons vie
With all that's best in chivalry;
Because we believe the end is nigh
Of all this Prussian deviltry;
Because we're joined, one great Ally,
To weld in one and sanctify
A world "safe for democracy":
These are some of the reasons why,
Ah, these are some of the reasons why.

A SONG FOR AMERICA

MEN of our western land,
Men strong of limb and hand,
Whose sires for right did stand,
Will ye now falter?
Ruthless in deed and deal,
Iron's the foemen's heel,
Stand ye, or cringe and kneel,
Ready's the halter.

Fair Belgium ravished lies,
France steadfast bleeds and dies,
Britain in arms defies
Earth, sky and ocean.
Just is our quarrel, today,
Up, arm, and join the fray!
Freedom, our hope and stay,
Death, our devotion!

Forward with flag unfurled!
Onward to free a world!
On, till the Hun lies hurled,
Lifeless and gory!
Red for our righteous wrath,
White be the aftermath,
Blue for our starry path,
Deathless in story.

A RECRUITING SONG

TO arms, to arms! your country's calling,
Men are dying, thrones are falling,
Briton and heroic Gaul
Fight, their backs against the wall;
Now's no time for coward or slacker,
If you love your country, back her,
Back her with your best and all,
Back her with your best and all.

Hark, O hark! the trumpet's blaring,
Heroes call to deeds of daring,
Brave men leave the shop and stall,
The forge, the study, mart and hall;
Now's no time for coward or slacker,
If you love your country, back her,
Back her with your best and all,
Back her with your best and all.

Land of peace! we love thy blessings,
Wives' embraces, babes' caressings,
But grim foes the world appall,
And plot, malignant, freedom's fall;
Now's no time for coward or slacker,
If you love your country, back her,
Back her with your best and all,
Back her with your best and all.

THE FLAG

O SOME sing Tipperary,
Some sing the Marseillaise,
And some prefer God Save the King,
Or other martial lays;
Give me the Spangled Banner,
With its stars now fifty fold,
I love our Spangled Banner,
For we sang that song of old.

Some love the brave tricolor,
And some the Union Jack,
Some hail the flag of Italy,
Or the yellow, red and black;
They're all our friends and allies,
Stout men, alert and bold,
But I love the Spangled Banner,
'Tis the flag we waved of old.

Flag of our faith and freedom,
Flag for which we've bled!
Flag of our home and happiness,
Flag of our honored dead!
No tyrant's sword shall wound thee,
No alien hand shall hold
Our loved Star Spangled Banner,
The flag we loved of old.

A MARCHING SONG

MARCHING along,
A million strong,
This be the song of the free:
Truth and the right,
These be our might,
In fight for the world's liberty.

From the north, from the south, from the west, from the east,
The country is stirred as with ferment of yeast;
For labor, the farmer, the city, the priest,
Are all one in this fight to be free.

From the south, from the north, from the east, from the west,
We have soldiers in making and drilling with zest;
For we give of our all, and we give of our best,
In this struggle to set the world free.

From the east, from the west, from the north, from the south,
The crops are in growing to fill every mouth;
We fear neither famine, nor whirlwind nor drouth,
Nor doubt what the outcome shall be.

From the west, from the east, from the south, from the north,
Our ships fill the ocean, our troops sally forth;

We know, as none other, what freedom is worth,
In this war of ours over the sea.

Marching away,
Staunch, in array,
For our stay, be this song of the free:
Truth and the right,
These be our might,
In fight for the world's liberty.

THE RECIPE

TAKE a fair piece of manhood,
Brimful of pluck,
Give him knowledge and resource,
A fine dash of luck,
Devotion to country,
Fervent love for the flag,
A clear sense of duty,
Not an atom of brag;
A head with a brain in't,
His honor, no stain in't,
His valor, no wane in't,
What peril may come.

Take a warm-hearted woman,
Wife, mother or maid,
Give her naught, she's already
Staunch, true, unafraid;
Steadfast in purpose,
Deft, tender of hand,
Courageous and equal
To each new demand;
An eye with a tear in't,
A heart with no fear in't,
A face with good cheer in't
To welcome him home.

With a team such as this,
You may verily believe me,
We can conquer the world:
Or my wise saws deceive me.

SONG OF THE SLACKER

NOW some think when there is a quarrel,
Your country being in a snarl,
'Tis right to show you love her;
I don't agree
To this; you see
I'd rather run to cover.

There're some who think we ought to buy
These U. S. bonds of liberty;
Not I, for I'm in clover:
The stocks I've got
Are a gilt-edged lot,
So I lie low in cover.

Some men go down in ships at sea
To hunt for U-boats; as for me
I'd hate to meet a rover;
I corner wheat
And things to eat,
And lie quite still in cover.

The're some enlist and take the chance
Of being bravely killed in France,
Where aeroplanes do hover;
If I'm to die,
I don't see why
I should not die in cover.

Whipper or whipped, I don't care which,
With either outcome, I'll be rich;
When this silly war is over,
I, then, to urge
My claims, emerge,
A patriot, from cover.

"YOU WOULD NOT KILL A MAN!"

"YOU would not kill a man!" he cried,
Brutality I can't abide,
War is not in God's plan."
He was the unctuous sort, a Friend—
Unto himself, I apprehend—
And as he talked, he rolled his eyes,
And still re-echoed parrot-wise,
"You would not kill a man!"

My friend, if you your nature so
Could change that to the war you'd go
To fight as brave men can,
E'en there your conscience you might save;
Your enemy's a maddened slave,
His dirty work he's bid to do:
So, though you ran him through and through,
You would not kill a man.

No, more, unless the red blood start
Your veins to action and your heart
Be changed, if change it can,
Unless you feel that right is right,
That men are pawn checks in God's sight,
That all must see this world war through:
Though in despair yourself you slew,
You would not kill a man.

EFFICIENCY

I

FOR forty years he plotted,
For forty years he planned,
His ships on every ocean,
His spies in every land;
He perverted social progress,
He exploited poor men's thrift,
He "utilized" the princeling
And the human wreck adrift.
There was naught for him too trifling,
Or too great, for him to wrench,
He corrupted press and pulpit,
Even Justice on the bench;
The maid who dressed my lady
The man who drove her car,
The statesman in the senate,
And the men who lead in war.

And yet for all his well-laid trains,
For all the fires he fanned,
For all the things he bought and sold,
And all the plots he planned:
He shall not pull it off, my boy,
He can not put it through,
He's up against a world in arms
Of fearless men and true.

II

Forty years of preparation,
All at a tyrant's will,
For forty years, a nation
In one eternal drill;
His furnaces ablazing
With cast of mighty guns,
Shipyards crammed with seacraft
And dreadnaughts, tons on tons;
Learn'd men concocting poison,
Devising gin and snare,
To ruin a friendly neighbor
And slay him unaware.
No enemy was moving,
No flag of war unfurled,
He plotted 'gainst a peaceful,
An unsuspecting world.

And yet for all his well-laid trains,
For all the fires he fanned,
For all the things he bought and sold,
And all the plots he planned:
He shall not pull it off, my boy,
He can not put it through,
He's up against a world in arms
Of fearless men and true.

III

For three years now you've beaten him,
In sky, on earth, at sea,
Briton, Frenchman, Belgian,
And the men of Italy;
He boasted he'd sack Paris,
The Marne proved that boast vain,
He names no more Verdun nor Somme,
He's beaten on the Aisne.
And now 'tis for America
To join the valiant line,
To run him from his cover,
Back to the river Rhine.
If you had plotted forty years
To murder your nearest friend,
What would you think if your success
Attained no better end?

Foiled, disgraced, bankrupt, and bled,
Despised: now God forefend,
If this be not for "efficiency"
A very sorry end.
He shall not pull it off, my boy,
He can not put it through,
He's up against a world in arms
Of fearless men and true.

THE UNDERSEA CRAFTSMAN

HE crawls upon the bottom like a slug,
He's callous, like a noxious, ugly bug,
The soul that moves his carcass is a thug.

He's covered with steel plates of steel-grey skin,
Beneath, a churning screw, his tail and fin,
His cargo's death, each death a heinous sin.

Give me the old-time buccaneer, the pirate or corsair,
With such the undersea craftsmen in honor ill compare:
Whom those rogues sank,
Or forced from plank,
They'd beaten on the square.

Ready to kill, to wreck, at least to rob,
He lurks, the while the steamer's steady throb
Draws near, now rising, falling, like a sob.

The long antennae of his periscope
Above the surface rise to peer and grope,
And the lithe wolf-sides slowly rise, aslope.

Give me the old-time buccaneer, the pirate or corsair,
With such the undersea craftsmen in decency ill pair:

Those sank no life-boat,
Once afloat;
These, child nor woman spare.

The coward torpedo's launched! It strikes! Ah, how
The brave ship staggers! Now she settles! Now
She lists, careens, sucked downward by the prow.

A thousand dead lie floating on the wave,
Their guiltless souls have found an ocean grave:
Who did this dastard deed, no grace can save.

Give me the old-time buccaneer, the pirate or corsair,
Of such the undersea craftsman's a most degenerate heir:
God grant us power,
In speedy hour,
To root him from his lair.

THE MISCREANT

IT was a slender Belgian lad,
A child to make a father glad,
Negligent, he stood beside
The highway, stretching white and wide;
Thence had come but yesterday
The Uhlans, riding on their way;
And now was heard, in steady beat,
A rising sound of marching feet.
They came, a mass of grey pulsating,
Steady-moving, palpitating,
On with unrelenting tread:
Spiked the helmet on each head,
Straight each gun, each eye, each stride,
Each belt, each knapsack coincide,
A bayonet rattled at each side.

The word rang, "Halt," and at the sound
The rifle butts thud on the ground.
"Come here, my boy," the Captain cried,
"Last night, a certain Belgian died;
And why, would'st know? that Belgian lied.
Now, tell me, thou, and tell me true—
Lest such a fate befall thee, too—
Look squarely at me, hold thee still:
Lie Belgian troops on yonder hill?"
The boy nor flinched nor caught his breath,
He knew a glorious lie meant death,
But looked the Captain in the eye
And said, "Nay, none are there, or nigh."

The conclusion of my story
Comes from a letter amatory,
Which one Fritz, in school-boy hand,
Wrote Gretchen in the Fatherland.

"Wouldst believe it, Gretchen, that boy lied;
The little traitor! he defied
Our Kaiser and the German race!
Dear me! that thoughts so black and base
Should harbor in so sweet a face!"

And then Fritz told, in close detail,
With many an expletive and wail,
How his company was mauled
By Belgian guns. What else he scrawled,
I spare the reader, both his fight
And courtship. He concludes:

"That night
We stood that boy against a wall,—
It was a church, as I recall.
He would not let us bind his eyes
Or tie his hands. We looked for cries,
For tears and pleadings for reprieve;
But not a word said he, save '*Vive*
La Belgique!' Now could mind conceive
Act more un-German! Could one believe
Such guilt to Kaiser and to God!
'Twas I, dear, led the shooting squad.
We fired—we all are steady-eyed—
And so the little miscreant died."

Thus wrote Fritz, in school-boy hand,
To Gretchen in the Fatherland.
If such be miscreants, what would I,
Or thou do, so to live, so die?

As for Fritz, there is no pother;
That precious piece of "cannon-fodder"
Was shot while looting with red hand:
And Gretchen weeps in the Fatherland.

WILHELM SOLILOQUIZES

I do confess it, I am vexed
And—first time in our reign—perplexed;
The world lies at our feet, perdue,
Yet something's wrong, some thing's askew.

Our mail-clad fist and itching hand
Has clutched and holds vast strips of land;
From Berlin unto Bagdad (almost),
Turk and Bulgar stand at call; most
Wholly ours is Emperor Charlie,
(To keep him such takes daily parley);
From Antwerp to the Danube's mouth,
The country's ours, both north and south,
We've crushed the Belgians, bled France white,
The cursed Roumanians put to flight;
The Russians bottled, Servians bled,
As to Armenians,—they're all dead.

The world lies at our feet, perdue;
Yet something's wrong, some thing's askew.

We've battered walls, redoubts, defences,
Taken towns and carried trenches,
Blown up strongholds, forts and towers;
Cities where the factory lowers,
Where the population dense is,
Deserts where no house nor fence is,
Mountains whence the view immense is,

Hamlets where the peasant cowers,
Chateau, field and farm are ours:
We've gone where no man in his senses
Ever thought to lead his powers.

And yet although the world's perdue,
There's something wrong, some thing's askew.

This war we've prosecuted duly,
Followed th' imperial war code truly:
Libraries we blow up and burn,
We'll need new books on our return;
We've toppled shrines on hill, in valley,
Have we not our *Sieges Allée?*

Of Rheims we'll leave no stone on stone,
We've got cathedrals of our own.
We've massacred the mob civilian,
Sold to slavery their children,
Milked and mulct each town its billion,
Each village, each chateau its million;
We've made the men and women slaves—
At least all those not in their graves.

Yet though the world lies thus perdue,
There's something wrong, some thing's askew.

With all these foolish nations beaten,
And nearly all our rations eaten,
With Hindenburg placed on a diet,
And all the things we've done to sigh at,
You'd think they'd heed my imperial fiat,
Accept a German peace—and quiet.

The precious fools don't seem to know
That when you're whipped, you must not go
On fighting; they insist on breaking
Rules of our imperial making:
Blowing up our trenches, taking
Prisoners, guns and spoils, on raking
Up old scores long settled, breaking
Our impregnable positions,
Capturing imperial munitions,
Our stout men and our "haupt" men heating,
Our breakfasts and our luncheons eating;
Eating, heating, meeting, beating,
Doing all things—but retreating.

The world lies at our feet, perdue;
Yet something's wrong, some thing's askew.

I've gone, with my imperial train
Due east—then traveled back again;
I've marched about, delivered speeches,
Promised all that out of reach is:
Victory, partition, plunder,
New gas-bombs, miracles, new thunder,
Yes, and not another blunder—
Ach Gott! that I could get from under!

'Tis said—by whom I cannot tell—
That hell is war and war is hell;
The saying's pat and yet no sermon;
(By the way, his name was Sherman);
But how could he know things so well

And prophesy like some old Merlin,
He who lived so far from Berlin?
Yet he casts a sort of spell
With his "Hell is war, war hell."

I do confess it, I am vexed,
And—first time in our reign—perplexed;
No ukase serves, no fiat or firman,
In vain I've trailed my sacred ermine;
I rather think he's right, that Sherman:
Could it be, God's not a German!

AN EPITAPH FOR WILHELM

WITH ABJECT APOLOGIES TO W. S. LANDOR

I strove with all, I always did like strife,
Napoleon I aped and Macchiavelli's art;
I rattle my Prussian sabre all my life,
And lost the game—but then, I looked the part.

NO RHYME FOR TEUTON

'TIS said, there is no rhyme for Teuton:
The man with the brand of the brute on,
The boar that continues to root on,
The Hun and his horde who still loot on,
The Goth who fells trees with their fruit on,
Who marshals the helpless to shoot on,
And tramples the child with his boot on.
Yet, 'tis said there's no rhyme word for Teuton:
From his Hindenburg Line may he scoot on—
But come, let's return to *nos moutons.*

THE ZEPPELINS

THE Zeppelins, they came, and went;
By their valiant emperor sent,
They visited the coasts of Kent
To drop bombs on the innocent;
They wrecked the humble tenement;
The children in the school they rent
And tore and shattered, and they spent
Some bombs on women, too; but tent
Or gun or man-at-arms, they "meant"
To hit, revealed no accident.

Now when they came to London town,
The aeroplanes soon brought them down;
And so this great experiment,
This costly piece of devilment,
Brought no renown:
The Zeppelins, they came, and went.

THE HOHENZOLLERN KINGS MUST GO

THE Hohenzollern kings must go,
With all their braggadocio,
Their warlike pageants and tableaux,
Their fiats *ex officio*,
The iron crosses they bestow,
These with their vanity must go:
The Hohenzollern kings must go.

The Hohenzollern kings must go,
Their spies, too, and the snug bureau
That everything to know doth know;
The diplomats who seedlings sow
Of discord and then watch them grow:
These with their lies and craft must go:
The Hohenzollern kings must go.

The Hohenzollern kings must go,
For crimes committed high and low,
For all the blood they've made to flow,
For slavery and untold woe,
For woman wronged and man's death throe,
For practices the brute below,
The Hohenzollern kings must go.

Down with these felons of red hand!
Down with this predatory band,
That terrorizes sea and land!

And say, if you must reason show
Why these and all their kind must go,
"Democracy will have it so:"
The Hohenzollern kings must go.

THE HUNNISH KING

Chant Royal

THE Hunnish king, he ruleth in his pride,
Who doubts his empire or denies his might?
By his imperial edicts all abide,
He sways his Teuton tribes in royal right;
His minions, toiling silently and late,
Build up, as coral reefs, his huge estate.
But greater is his greed, he now doth play
The gambler's stakes for universal sway;
Nor recks the aftermath which followeth,
Strutting the small Napoleon of his day:
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

The Hunnish king, like to a thief, doth hide
His plots, his sly intriguings shun the light;
He sows dissensions, scheming to divide
All not his allies or his slaves; the kite
Is not more cowardly, vultures so await
Their gorge of carrion. With golden bait
He tempts the covetous, he leads astray
The ambitious with his favors to betray
Their dearest; who withstands, he punisheth;
Malevolent be others as they may,
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

The Hunnish king's a war-lord, he doth ride
In his swift car, to rearward of the fight,
And, knowing his worth, lest any ill betide,

Blazeth thereon a red cross in men's sight;
Against his foes this king is passionate,
His legions marching sing a hymn of hate;
With poison gas he tortureth his prey,
With liquid fire he fighteth; he doth slay
Both child and mother, none he pitieth;
His joy's to terrorize, amaze, dismay:
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

The Hunnish king is cruel; fortified
Or free, he raseth cities; his delight
It is to lay a peaceful country-side
In waste; he smiles to see the sorry plight
Of harmless women urged on to their fate
By bayonets; in jocular debate
He plans new raids, to kill and to affray;
For slaughtered babes, he grants a holiday;
He laughs at treaties torn and broken faith,
And asks what power on earth dare say him nay:
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

The Hunnish king's a portent, evil-eyed,
He blasteth where he looketh; as the blight
All things before him wither; as the tide
He sweepeth clean, as lightning doth affright.
A world of groveling slaves he'd have, be great
As Attila! O what can expiate
His crimes? What tongue of iron can inveigh
In utterance adequate the black array
Of all his wickedness? Fire harrieth,
And lost souls burn; sin's ransom he must pay:
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

When at the bar of God this king shall wait,
What tongue of craft can be his advocate?
What plea for clemency or for delay
Dare he put forth to beg a moment's stay
Of justice' sword which never faltereth?
Woe unto him and all who tread his way:
The Hun is far more terrible than death.

TO MERCY

SWEET Mercy, maid with eyes of tender blue
Suffused with tears, there's none can honor more
Thy name than him who knows without thy store
Of grace his hopes of heaven could be but few.
Yet come not now, while honest men pursue
The brigand who has broken in our door;
Our need is not for thee; come not before
We dare receive and hearken to thee, too.
Our need is now for Justice; he's no maid
Of tender mein, but strong in thew and limb,
He bears a naked sword in his right hand;
No bandage binds his eyes which, unafraid,
Dare look straight at the midday sun; to him
There's naught but right and what right must demand.

LIFE AND DEATH

LIFE, I do not love thee so
That I'd not willingly forego
Any blessing thou'd'st bestow
And, grudging, then deny me.

Death, I do not fear thee, though
Thou creep, insistent, groping, slow,
Or flash instanter, in the glow
Of battle: I defy thee.

MEN ALL MUST DIE

MEN all must die,
And lie
E'er long in the ground;
Men all must sigh e'er rest be found.

What is it, then,
That men
Do struggle for?
It is that, when they are no more,

They may believe
They leave
The world a little better
For some achievement or broken fetter.

To freedom's call
Our all
Is the least to give;
To live in thrall is not to live;

But in the fight
For right
To pass death's portal:
This is to write a name immortal.

TO DEATH

INDUSTRIOUS Death, who with thy flashing scythe
Reapest in crimson battle-fields the souls
Of men; fight they for right or pay the tolls
Slaves pay their lords, thou ever hast thy tithe.
Glorious each serried rank, alert and lithe,
Rises, advances, as the breaker rolls,
And as the breaker, crashes, breaks and shoals
In shattered foam. Dear God! that men should writhe
In pain; that men thine image should deface!
Our own dear sons,—alas imperious Death!—
Their step is light, they march in the forefront;
Thou knowest them not: they will not shun the brunt
Of battle, they will look thee in the face,
And with their brave deeds quicken e'en thy breath.

SONNETS OF THE NATIONS*

*These sonnets were written in August, 1917.

EUROPE

'TIS not that we have sinned, that men have striven,
The weak have suffered, and the cruel strong
Have had their will and wrested right so long:
For none of these dread things are our hearts riven;
For man, alas, is man. But to have driven
A mine beneath a world, to plot to wrong
Mankind and ravish sacred freedom! Long
May he who thus has sinned remain unshriven.
Ah Europe! thou hast nourished at thy breast
A bastard changeling, none of thine; the ban
Of Cain is his; the world demands thou fling
Him from thee; lest, repudiating man,
An all-repentant God bestow the thing
Which we call reason on some nobler beast.

AMERICA

THY liberty, though common as the sun,
Beaming on all, is not a trivial toy,
To tinker with, undo, remake, destroy;
'Tis rather the talent which the Lordly One
Gave to his servant, dear preserved as won
By faithful use; in liberty thy joy
Is not the miser's, thou shouldst so employ
Thy freedom that thy Lord shall say, "Well done."
Dear land, thou first madst liberty thine own,
Striking the shackles from thy bondsmen; then
Extend'st abroad thy strong protecting arm
Unto the tyranny-laden; now, full grown,
Thou standest freedom's champion among men:
Thine be war's laurel and the peaceful palm.

ENGLAND

DEAR England, mother of our race and kind,
A common lore is ours, a common tongue,
A common love of freedom; for among
That fair god's votaries 'twere hard to find
A deeper love than in thy heart is shrined.
For us as for thee, rapturous Shelley sung,
To us as to thee, facile Shakespeare flung
The wit and wisdom of his matchless mind.
Who stands for England and her brood, now stands
For right; who bleeds with us, bleeds in a cause
Which all that's hero in our blood demands.
We left thee, mother, that we might be free,
As we saw freedom under our own laws:
Free to be ever, we return to thee.

TO FRANCE

MOTHER of arts, fair France, how have we wronged
Thee in our heart of hearts? We thought thou wast
All lost to thine own imminent peril, tossed
On the light waves of frivolity; when, thronged,
We saw thy councils in debate prolonged,
Procrastinate e'en defence, the frost
Seemed gathered 'bout thy heart as one that's lost:
Little we knew thee or what to thee belonged.
The Marne in trumpet notes proclaims that thou
Still Freedom's bulwark art, and Verdun held
Declares thee ever faithful to thy vow;
When Charles Martel the Saracen repelled,
"Savior of Europe," free men did repute thee:
Once more, "free Europe's Savior," I salute thee!

BELGIUM

TRUE in thine own free soul, thou didst assign
No note of falsehood unto other men,
Steadfast for right, thou look'st for right again,
That what men do should in the daylight shine;
To stand apart had easy been, to whine
Necessity, upon that black day when
The iron hordes of war, unleashed their den,
Trampled on all that sacred was and thine.
Such was not in thy heart. The stars proclaim
Thy valor, sacrifice and martyrdom;
The sun shall blaze in gold thy matchless fame
When all the petty lauds of men are dumb;
To dissolution shall this mad earth come
E'er pen record, than thine, a nobler name.

ITALY

LAND of the Caesars, autocrat wast thou
Of empires, arbiter of laws; under thy yoke
The skin-clad Teuton's cowered, thy legions broke
Their savage pride; thou taughtest them to plow
And live in cities, show'dst them arts, and how
To adore a milder God than Thor. They woke
Not to thy voice; naught from them didst evoke
Save envy for the laurels of thy brow.
Envy and lust for empire, cruelty—
This last, their own—these are the seeds of woe
Thou sowedst in fallow land, which quickening,
Have grown this fatal banyan tree. Aye, fling
Thy soul into this fray, O Italy!
Amends for this seed's sowing thou dost owe.

RUSSIA

HAIL to thee, Russia, youngest of the free!
Strong as the young are strong, thou com'st to us,
Ready to give of thy great overplus,
Thy fetters gone; now none again shall see
Thee kneel, the serf of tinseled tyranny.
Brave spirit of struggle, like Prometheus
Unchained, thou stalkest, huge and glorious,
Bringing thine own the fire of liberty.
That fire is of a high celestial birth,
Filling the heavens with its light and glory;
That fire has warmed the children of the earth,
And lit with sacred flame their simple story:
See that thou keep thy altars lit; in vain
The struggle else, thy sacrifice and pain.

POLAND

AH, Poland! thine has been the bitter fate
Of Naboth at the hands of Ahab, who
Coveted his neighbor's vineyard and then slew
Him subtly; so, thy rightful power and state
Was reft thee. Gorge the harpy's greed can sate,
Not that of kings. They quartered thee and drew
Thy vitals; nay, thy very name they threw
Onto the heap of things annihilate.
But unremembered by the free hast thou
Been never; for when men have turned their eyes
Towards dawn and better things, or have unfurled
A flag against old wrongs, thy brow
They've longed to see recrowned. God grant thou rise
In resurrection from this burning world!

GREECE

THAT thou shouldst hesitate, O Greece, that thou
Shouldst hold thy hand, when Europe's free-
dom hung
In balance: who can credit this? Thou, sung
Of poets, thou whose daring trireme's prow
First clove the seas of liberty! Ah, how
Subdued's become the spirit which once flung
Back Persia's haughty hosts, the sword which wrung
From the black Turk thy freedom, even now!
Why shouldst thou harbor base barbarian kings,
Minions of tyranny? Has not Sparta thews
And weapons, too, and men? And Athens, when
Has Athens failed resourcefulness? Nay, muse
No more, action alone true honor brings;
Arise and take thy place among free men.

AUSTRIA

FELL Austria, thou octopus among
The nations of mankind, 'tis not with hand,
Muscular and human, thou holdst thy land
Of hybrid provinces in one; far flung,
Thy bloodless, grasping tentacles have clung
To all they reached, stifling with tightening band
All effort to be free. Thou hast unmanned
Thy hapless slaves, ignoble and unsung.
Just is thy fate. A fool is he who allies
Himself for wrong with stronger rogues, who swears
In truth to be false, in falsehood true; thy fall
Came, when thou sawst no more with thine own eyes:
Justice still holds the scales and wrong repairs,
Who made thee catspaw, now holds thee in thrall.

TURKEY

UNSPEAKABLE, insensate, lost, too long
Thy ominous crescent in its blood-red field
Dishonors Europe; far too long we've steeled
Our minds against clear justice, fancied wrong
Could be done such as thou, to whom belong
All craft, all cunning, all deceits that shield,
All sloath and loathsomeness the world can yield,
All wrong the weak have suffered from the strong.
Fit ally art thou of the Goth and Hun
In their mad struggle to enslave mankind;
Fit thy reward shall be, thy service done,
When thou claimst baksheesh with thy outstretched palms;
Deaf to thy cries, to thy deserts, stone blind,
They'll spurn thee, wretch, an outcast begging alms.

GERMANY

HERE Germany lies, prostrate, unmanned
A nobler nation from the hand
Of God ne'er came, nor yet was planned.

'T was not another's crime or sin
That tempted her flesh, her soul to win;
The rotting gangrene was within.

A deadlier pride than Lucifer's,
A stubborner spirit, too, was hers;
The curse of Cain is now her curse.

There must she lie, our gates without,
Until remorse shall stir about
Her heart, and Mercy seek her out.

The honorable little plot
The sonnet tills, for such is not.

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